



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

October 8, 2025

Inspector General Jeffrey Shapiro
Office of the Inspector General
One Ashburton Place, Room 1311
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Request for Investigation of MassDOT's Highway Plaza Contract Award Process

Dear Inspector General Shapiro:

We write today to request that pursuant to *M.G.L. Ch. 12A §§ 7-9** your office initiate a full investigation into the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) bid and selection process for the contract to renovate and operate the Commonwealth's highway service plaza system.

Serious concerns have been raised regarding the integrity and transparency of this process, undermining the public's already shaky confidence in the state's procurement system. Regretfully, the allegations of impropriety between MassDOT and the winning bidder, Applegreen – a foreign-based company – were apparently validated when Applegreen abruptly chose to withdraw from negotiations with MassDOT on the eve of a scheduled oversight hearing before the Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight.

The suddenness and timing of this decision, following the failure of both Applegreen and MassDOT officials to produce the full records of communications requested by the Committee, raise significant questions about what they were trying to hide from the Committee and the public.

Given these troubling circumstances, we respectfully request that your office investigate the following:

- 1. The Solicitation of bids** – Did this RFP follow the appropriate sections of MGL and MA Code of Regulations governing the State and DOT's procurement processes?

Including, but not limited to:

1. M.G.L. ch. 6C - *specifically* § 62
2. M.G.L. ch. 30, §§ 39A-40 – *specifically* § 39M
3. 801 CMR 21.00
4. M.G.L. Ch. 7, §§ 22–28
5. M.G.L. Ch. 30B – Uniform Procurement Act (generally not including DOT)

* M.G.L. ch. 12A § 7: *The office of inspector general shall act to prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse in the expenditure of public funds, whether state, federal, or local, or relating to programs and operations involving the procurement of any supplies, services, or construction, by agencies, bureaus, divisions, sections, departments, offices, commissions, institutions and activities of the commonwealth, including those districts, authorities, instrumentalities or political subdivisions created by the general court and including the cities and towns.*



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2. **The evaluation of bids** – How were the multiple proposals reviewed and scored? Were the evaluation criteria consistently and fairly applied.
3. **Comparative benefits to the Commonwealth** – Why was Applegreen awarded the contract despite reports that competing proposals contained terms substantially more favorable to Massachusetts taxpayers and consumers.
4. **Potential conflicts of interest or undue influence** – Whether communications or relationships between Applegreen representatives and any Massachusetts officials, whether part of MassDOT or otherwise, influenced the procurement process in a manner inconsistent with state laws and best practices, or resulted in the personal gain to any such MA official.
5. **Transparency and records compliance** – The extent to which MassDOT and Applegreen adhered to statutory and regulatory requirements for disclosure and record production during both the bidding and subsequent oversight processes.

Beyond the simple accounting of the more than \$1Billion in taxpayer dollars involved, this contract and process is emblematic of the fiduciary responsibility that the Commonwealth and its agencies have to the residents thereof. Ensuring transparency and accountability in all operations and spending is paramount to maintaining the necessary trust between the residents of the Commonwealth and their Government.

Should it be discovered that any individual(s) or agencies acted nefariously for their own self-interest, we call upon the Administration to take swift action to ensure accountability.

The citizens of Massachusetts deserve a procurement process that is transparent, competitive, and above reproach. A full and independent review by your office is essential to restore public trust and ensure that future contracts are awarded based solely on merit and the best interests of the Commonwealth.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to provide any legislative support necessary to facilitate this important review.

Respectfully,



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